

REMARKS

This application contains claims 1-105. Claims 1-54 have been canceled without prejudice. New claims 55-105 are hereby added. No new matter has been introduced. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks Examiners Tran and Morse for the courtesy of an interview with Applicant's representative, Sanford T. Colb (Reg. No. 26,856), held in the USPTO on June 15, 2005. At the interview, Mr. Colb presented a draft amendment to claims 1 and 19 and argued the patentability of the claims over the cited art (Hunt et al., U.S. Patent 6,496,855). Agreement was not reached regarding the patentability of the claims, and the Examiner suggested that further detail be added to the claims in order to distinguish the present invention over the cited art.

Claims 1-12, 14-36 and 38-54 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over Hunt (cited above). While disagreeing with the grounds of rejection (as argued in response to the previous Official Action in this case), Applicant has canceled claims 1-54 in the interest of expediting prosecution, and has added new claims 55-105 in order to distinguish over the cited art in the manner suggested by the Examiner in the interview. The new claims are similar in substance to the canceled claims, while adding further detail regarding implementation of the present patent application, as described in the specification.

Hunt describes a Web site registration proxy system, in which a registration agent site serves as an intermediary between an Internet user and other sites. The agent allows users to register with new sites automatically and to move between registered sites via a single interface (abstract). A registration processing system is responsible for submitting user data to new sites, and includes the functionality of identifying and resolving conflicts between the user's privacy preferences and the site's policies (col. 5, lines 34-45). For this purpose, the registration processing system uses a registration profile database that includes site data privacy policies (col. 6, lines 8-14) and a user profile database that includes privacy preferences data which describe the policies the user would like a site to have if the user data is to be given to the site (col. 6, lines 44-56).

Claim 55 recites a computer-implemented method for privacy management that permits different, respective privacy policies to be assigned to different Web pages on the same Web site, which belongs to an enterprise. Different items of information that a user exchanges with the Web site are subject to different privacy policies, depending on the Web page through which the information is exchanged. New claim 55 is based roughly on

original claims 1, 5 and 11, with additional information from the specification (for example, on page 4, lines 1-14).

In regard to claim 1, the Examiner maintained that Hunt inherently describes non-uniform privacy policies (col. 2, lines 61-64, and col. 4, lines 5-8). Even if this analysis is accepted, in Hunt the non-uniformity is associated by the user with different items of information that the user provides to Hunt's registration proxy (col. 7, line 52 – col. 8, line 9). The proxy applies the user preferences in submitting the user information to Web sites. Hunt, however, neither teaches nor suggests a method by which different privacy policies can be maintained and applied on different pages in the same Web site of the same enterprise, as required by claim 55.

Therefore, claim 55 is believed to be patentable over the cited art. In view of the patentability of claim 55, claims 56-67, which depend from claim 55, are also believed to be patentable.

Claim 68 recites a computer-implemented method for privacy management in which nodes in a body of information are assigned privacy rules hierarchically. This claim is similar to canceled claim 16, with added subject matter taken from the specification (see page 26, lines 3-14, for example). Each node (except the root node) has one or more ancestors in the hierarchy, and at least some of the nodes have their own respective privacy rules. This sort of hierarchy is shown, for example, in Fig. 5 of the present patent application. The computer computes the specific privacy policy for any given node by combining the privacy rules assigned to the given node with the privacy policies of the ancestor nodes of the given node in the hierarchy. When a user asks to access a given node, this combination of privacy rules is provided to the user and serves as the privacy policy for exchanging information with the node.

In rejecting claim 16, which was drawn to related subject matter, the Examiner referred to a passage in Hunt (col. 7, lines 52-65) in which various categories of information are defined (green, yellow and red, as described in col. 8, lines 2-14). Hunt, however, neither teaches nor suggests any sort of method for computation of privacy policies, let alone the specific hierarchical method of combining privacy rules over multiple nodes that is recited in new claim 68. Therefore, claim 68 is believed to be patentable over the cited art. In view of the patentability of claims 68, claims 69-71, which depend from claim 68, are also believed to be patentable.

Claim 71 is a dependent claim, which adds the limitation that the privacy rules assigned to each node are represented as policy sections, which are written in XML and

comprise an attribute identifying the parent of the node. This claim is literally supported in the specification on page 25. Applicant has added the claim in response to the Examiner's request in the interview that more detail be incorporated in order to show how the claimed invention is different from the cited reference.

Claim 72 recites a computer-implemented method for privacy management in which an application (i.e., a computer program) requesting private user information is queried in order to determine its compliance with the privacy policies subject to which the information in question was received from the user. This claim is similar in subject matter to original claim 19, but clarifies that the query to the application is issued when the application submits its request (see specification, page 34, lines 13-28). In this manner, the computer is able to verify the specific, per-user, per-item compliance of the application before the information is provided to the application

In regard to claim 19, the Examiner cited a passage in Hunt (col. 2, line 66 – col. 3, line 9) that relates to intercepting communications addressed to the user, rather than intercepting an information request by an application. The Examiner combined this citation with another passage (col. 5, lines 37-50) that describes how Hunt's registration proxy gathers information about different Web sites. In the interview, the Examiner noted an additional passage (col. 4, lines 1-43) that describes the e-mail filtering function in greater detail. None of the cited passages, however, relate to determining which items of stored information may be provided to applications. These passages certainly fail to disclose or suggest the sequential steps of intercepting a request from an application and then querying the application to determine compliance before providing user information to the application, as required by claim 72.

Thus, claim 72 is believed to be patentable over the cited art. In view of the patentability of claim 72, dependent claims 73-78 are also believed to be patentable.

Claims 79-105 recite apparatus and computer software products that operate on principles similar to the methods of claims 55-78. Therefore, for the reasons explained above with respect to claims 55, 68 and 72, claims 79-105 are believed to be patentable over the cited art.

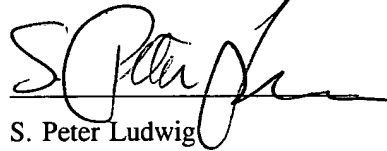
Claims 13 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Hunt in view of Barrett et al. (U.S. Patent 6,581,059). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Barrett was filed January 24, 2000, but published only on June 17, 2003, when it issued as a patent. Therefore, Barrett would qualify as prior art against the present patent application only via 35 U.S.C. 102(e). Applicant notes, however, that at the time the present invention was

made, the inventors were employees of International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) and were subject to an obligation to assign the invention to IBM. Such an assignment has been duly recorded in the USPTO. Barrett is likewise assigned to IBM. Therefore, under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 103(c), Barrett is disqualified as prior art against the present patent application, and the rejection of claims 13 and 37 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should have been withdrawn, had the claims not been canceled. New claims 65 and 88 recite identical subject matter to canceled claims 13 and 37.

Applicant believes the amendments and remarks presented hereinabove to be fully responsive to all of the grounds of rejection raised by the Examiner. In view of these amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims in the present application are in order for allowance. Notice to this effect is hereby requested.

Date: July 8, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Peter Ludwig', written over a horizontal line.

S. Peter Ludwig

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